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FEEDING PRACTICES OF INFANTS AGED 0-16 WEEKS IN LANGAS SUB-LOCATION

BY

GRACE M W NJOROGE

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ABSTRACT

Background

Feeding patterns comprise the first feeds infants are given either in the form of breastmilk, formula milk or complementary feeds. Feeding patterns are as a result of information on feeding that the mothers and guardians have. The information should include the period for feeding, the importance of continued feeding, the appropriate timing of the introduction of complementary feeds, the types and amount of feeds to give, and their safety.

Objective: To determine the feeding practices of mothers with infants aged 0-16 weeks in Langas Sub-Location.

Methodology: Study design: Descriptive Cross-sectional.

Study area: Langas Sub-Location.

Sampling method: Purposive sampling.

Methods: Data was collected using interviewer administered questionnaire on 385 mothers/guardians with infants aged 0-16 weeks in Langas Sub-Location. The "since birth recall" was used to ask the mothers/guardians about the information and practice of infant feeding. Variables were sought on percentages of all available information and reflected, as well as the sources of all information and their frequencies. The representations were made in frequencies and diagrams. The age ranges of both mothers/guardians and infants were described. Associations of content of information and feeding practice were analyzed using SPSS 12.0 statistical software and Chi square trends sought.

Results: The study subjects were mothers aged 16-53 years. Majority of the respondents (99.7%) had nurses as initial providers of information while 73% had other sources as informants. Majority of the respondents (96.8%) reported that they received information of breastfeeding as an option. However, 18% of the infants were exclusively breastfed.

Conclusion: The respondents adopted different infant feeding practices because of: Age of the infants, respondents' level of education, information received from different sources, different contents of information and information offered.

Recommendations: There is a need for sources of information on infant feeding to be encouraged to give complete, correct and consistent information on exclusive breastfeeding.